

IN THE NEWS

Excess base computers improve local schools

By Master Sgt.
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Out with the old and in with the new.

With the end of the fiscal year right around the corner, new desktops, laptops and printers will soon replace older models in base offices. Instead of allowing these old "veteran" systems to simply collect dust, the 437th Communications Squadron is helping find a good home for excess equipment by donating computers to local schools.

Many local schools are struggling for computer systems, especially with an ever-increasing demand for technology in the classroom. Susie Emborn, Hunley Park Elementary School principal, said the school's 550 children are often limited to only one state-funded computer per classroom of 30 students.

Hunley Park's students, ranging from 4-year-old pre-schoolers to sixth graders, are introduced to computers through beginning reading programs. The computers are later put to use for math and science tutorials.

"They just love going to the computer lab, but with 550 kids pounding on a keyboard, the keypads start falling off," said Emborn. "It's easy to replace, so we love computer gifts. We don't upgrade like businesses do, so we'll take anything."

Usable computer systems, especially those with 486 MHz or better processing units, as well as serviceable monitors and printers, are ideal for donation. Beginning in July, Charleston AFB donated more than 80 pieces of equipment to Stall High School and Hunley Park Elementary School, with additional equipment slated for Windsor Hill Elementary School this month. However, the demand is great and local needs are always increasing.

Since receiving steady equipment requests from several organizations, the 437 CS implemented a new donation system rather than

relying on the Defense Reutilization and Marketing Office system, which was historically difficult for local schools to access.

The process begins when a unit commander or an automated data processing equipment custodian identifies excess equipment. With coordination between the donating unit, the communication squadron's automated data processing element and the Defense

Information Service Agency, local schools requesting equipment will be notified and the equipment relinquished.

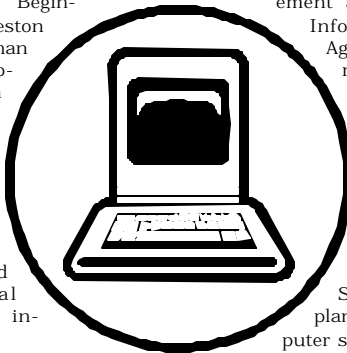
Stall High School was the recipient of a 40-piece equipment donation. School officials plan to use the computer systems in numerous facets, including SAT preparation courses, tutorial programs, library research engines and business education courses.

James Hampton, Stall High School principal, said that having more computers allows the school to offer more courses utilizing computer labs, thereby reducing student-teacher ratios for their 1,000 students.

"With technology being a driving force in the nation and world today, we need to make sure we have as many of our students working on computers as possible," said Hampton. "Whether it's the federal or state government that has surplus equipment which can be used at the high school, middle school, or even elementary school level, that equipment can be best used by students rather than just thrown away."

Identifying excess equipment to unit equipment custodians can make a great difference for the community's schools.

For more information on the donation process, call Master Sgt. John Kannegaard, 437th Communications Squadron, chief network acquisitions element, at 963-2933. Local schools or community-based educational agencies wishing to request equipment should contact the 437th Public Affairs office at 963-5608.



Contracting honored Federal Acquisition Award recognizes Hunley Park renovations as benchmark

The 2000 Federal Acquisition Awards recognized the 437th Contracting Squadron for its work as acquisition experts in government, Sept. 12, in Washington D.C.

The 437 CONS showed how performance-based service contracting can save significant amounts of time and money, even when the winner of the contract isn't the lowest bidder, during the Hunley Park Military Family Housing renovation project.

Charleston AFB received money from Congress on the condition that it be spent quickly. The base had to alter its normal approach to renovation projects, which usually required 180 days to develop a design. Instead, the contracting squadron put together a team of experts to conduct various aspects of the project concurrently.

They devised a way to avoid common and costly renovation contract modifications caused when unexpected problems appear as construction proceeds.

Instead of attempting to

define the scope of the contract without knowing all of the potential problems hidden within the walls and yards of old houses, the contracting squadron required the contractor to experiment with a few homes.

Prototyping revealed site conditions before the contractor ordered equipment and materials to complete the job. The acquisition team also required all bidders to provide evidence of past performance in whole-house renovation and underground utility upgrades.

The best-value contractor selection, trading off price against past performance, weeded out the low bidder, whose experience was too limited. Future occupants visited the prototype houses to make suggestions for improvements in the design.

The acquisition innovations added up to a total cost increase of \$35,000, or .06 percent, a fraction of a typical renovation project overrun. (Submitted by the 437th Contracting Squadron.)

Hurricane evacuation routes

In case of a hurricane evacuation, the South Carolina Department of Transportation recommends the following routes of travel for Charleston residents:

Edisto Island, Adams Run: Take S.C. 174 to U.S. 17. Then take U.S. 17 south to S.C. 64, which will go to Walterboro, then on to North Augusta.

Yonges Island, Meggett, Hollywood, Ravenel: Use S.C. 165 to U.S. 17. Then take U.S. 17 south to S.C. 64.

Johns Island, Kiawah Island and Seabrook: Take S.C. 700 and Road S-20 (Bohicket Road) to U.S. 17. Take U.S. 17 south to S.C. 64 to Walterboro, then on to North Augusta.

James Island and Folly Beach: Use S.C. 171 to U.S. 17. Then travel south on U.S. 17 to I-526 to the reversed lanes of I-26.

City of Charleston: The west side of the city (West Ashley) should use S.C. 61 to U.S. 78, then to Aiken and North Augusta. Downtown should use the normal lanes of I-26.

North Charleston: Take U.S. 52 (Rivers Avenue) to U.S. 78, U.S. 178 to Orangeburg, or U.S. 176. Or, continue north on U.S. 52. The right lane of U.S. 52 at Goose Creek will continue on to Moncks Corner. In Moncks Corner, it will be directed onto S.C. 6, where S.C. 6 will take evacuees toward Columbia. The left lane of U.S. 52 at Goose Creek will go onto U.S. 176 to Columbia.

DOD attacks Ecstasy drug

What drug comes in tablets, makes "painful" realities go away and is popular among hedonistic young people today — including some service members?

The answer is an illegal "designer" drug called Ecstasy, also known as "Adam," "XTC," "Clarity" and "Essence," among other street names. Its use by service members increased markedly in fiscal 1999, and that is a concern to the Department of Defense, said Army Col. Mick Smith,

science and testing officer of DOD's Office of the Coordinator for Drug Enforcement Policy and Support.

Ecstasy has no medical value and cannot be prescribed legally, Smith said. The drug is mostly manufactured in secret labs in the Netherlands and Belgium, with worldwide distribution arranged by organized crime. Ecstasy abuse can be dangerous, said Smith.

"Users taking too much Ecstasy may become dehydrated, have elevated temperature, have a drop in blood pressure, have a seizure, and die," Smith said.

DOD conducted 2,273,998 urinalyses in fiscal 1999, according to Smith. Marijuana positives were 12,006, cocaine positives were 2,839, methamphetamine positives were 807, Ecstasy positives were 432, and lysergic acid diethylamide — LSD — positives were 325.

Using Ecstasy violates Article 112-A of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, Smith said.

"Many drug users believe that they will not get caught, but when they do get caught in a random drug test, the consequences are harsh," he concluded. (AFPN)